

1 Claudia Center, State Bar No. 158255  
 2 Gina Gemello, State Bar No. 282964  
 3 The LEGAL AID SOCIETY –  
 4 EMPLOYMENT LAW CENTER  
 5 180 Montgomery Street, Suite 600  
 6 San Francisco, CA 94104  
 7 Telephone: (415) 864-8848  
 8 Facsimile: (415) 593-0096  
 9 Emails: ccenter@las-elc.org  
 10 ggemello@las-elc.org

11 Attorneys for Plaintiff-Intervenors  
 12 ANDREW QUAN, NICHOLAS JONES and  
 13 ELIZABETH HENNESSEY-SEVERSON

14 **IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**

15 **FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

16 THE DEPARTMENT OF FAIR  
 17 EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING,

18 Plaintiff,

19 v.

20 LAW SCHOOL ADMISSION COUNCIL,  
 21 INC., *ET AL.*,

22 Defendants.

23 JOHN DOE *et al.*, and all other similarly  
 24 situated individuals,

25 Real Parties in Interest

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26 ANDREW QUAN, NICHOLAS JONES, and  
 27 ELIZABETH HENNESSEY-SEVERSON,

28 Plaintiff-Intervenors,

v.

LAW SCHOOL ADMISSION COUNCIL,  
 INC.,

Defendant.

Case No. CV 12-1830-EMC

COMPLAINT IN INTERVENTION FOR  
 DAMAGES, EQUITABLE RELIEF, AND  
 ATTORNEYS' FEES AND COSTS FOR  
 VIOLATIONS OF THE AMERICANS WITH  
 DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990, 42 U.S.C. §  
 12101, *ET SEQ.*; CALIFORNIA'S UNRUH  
 CIVIL RIGHTS ACT, CAL. CIVIL CODE §  
 51, *ET SEQ.*, AND CALIFORNIA'S UNFAIR  
 BUSINESS PRACTICES ACT, CAL. BUS. &  
 PROF. CODE § 17200, *ET SEQ.*

1 Plaintiff-Intervenors ANDREW QUAN, NICHOLAS JONES, and ELIZABETH  
 2 HENNESSEY-SEVERSON complain and allege as follows:

3 **INTRODUCTION**

4 1. This is an action for relief from Defendant's violation of the civil rights of Plaintiff-  
 5 Intervenors ANDREW QUAN, NICHOLAS JONES, and ELIZABETH HENNESSEY-  
 6 SEVERSON. These violations, which are more particularly alleged herein, include disability-  
 7 based discrimination in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), disability-based  
 8 discrimination in violation of California's Unruh Civil Rights Act, and unlawful business  
 9 practices in violation of California's Unfair Business Practices Act.

10 2. Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN, JONES, and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON are individuals  
 11 with disabilities within the meaning of federal and state disability nondiscrimination laws,  
 12 including Title III of the ADA and California's Unruh Civil Rights Act.

13 3. Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN, JONES, and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON requested  
 14 accommodations from Defendant LSAC for the Law School Admission test (LSAT). In  
 15 violation of law, Defendant LSAC imposed upon Plaintiff-Intervenors onerous and unnecessary  
 16 documentation requirements and subjected them to an arbitrary, ineffective, and unpredictable  
 17 evaluation and appeals procedure. In violation of law, Defendant LSAC refused to make  
 18 reasonable modifications to testing conditions for Plaintiff-Intervenors. In violation of law, after  
 19 finally providing testing accommodations to Plaintiff-Intervenor HENNESSEY-SEVERSON,  
 20 Defendant LSAC refused to provide her with an LSAT score in the same format as her  
 21 nondisabled peers.

22 4. Plaintiff-Intervenors seek declaratory and injunctive relief, equitable relief, actual  
 23 damages, treble damages, restitution, reasonable attorneys' fees and costs, as well as other  
 24 appropriate relief as determined by this court.

25 **JURISDICTION**

26 5. This court has jurisdiction over the subject matter and the parties pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §  
 27 1331. Plaintiff-Intervenors bring this suit under Title III of the ADA, 42 U.S.C. § 12181, *et seq.*

1       6. This court has supplemental jurisdiction over the related state law claims pursuant to 28  
2 U.S.C. § 1337(a). Plaintiff-Intervenors' claims pursuant to California's Unruh Civil Rights Act,  
3 Cal. Civil Code § 51, *et seq.*, and California's Unfair Business Practices Act, Cal. Bus. & Prof.  
4 Code § 17200, *et seq.*, are related, as all of Plaintiff-Intervenors' claims share common operative  
5 facts. Resolving all state and federal claims in a single action serves the interests of judicial  
6 economy, convenience, and fairness to the parties.

## VENUE

8       7. Venue is proper in the Northern District of California pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1331(b)(2),  
9 in that the claims of Plaintiff-Intervenors and Real Parties in Interest QUAN and HENNESSEY-  
10 SEVERSON along with the claims of other Real Parties in Interest occurred herein.

## PARTIES

12 1. Plaintiff-Intervenor ANDREW QUAN is a citizen of the United States and a resident of  
13 Hayward (Alameda County, California).

14 2. Plaintiff-Intervenor QUAN has Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD),  
15 dysgraphia, hypotonia, and a visual-motor deficit with slow processing speed. These conditions  
16 limit and substantially limit several major life activities. He is an individual with a “disability”  
17 within the meaning of federal and state disability nondiscrimination laws, including Title III of  
18 the ADA and California’s Unruh Civil Rights Act.

19       3. Plaintiff-Intervenor NICHOLAS JONES is a citizen of the United States and a resident of  
20      Palm Desert (Riverside County, California).

21       4. Plaintiff-Intervenor JONES has amblyopia and posterior vitreous detachment, which are  
22 visual impairments. These conditions limit and substantially limit several major life activities.  
23 He is an individual with a “disability” within the meaning of federal and state disability  
24 nondiscrimination laws, including Title III of the ADA and California’s Unruh Civil Rights Act.

25 5. Plaintiff-Intervenor ELIZABETH HENNESSEY-SEVERSON is a citizen of the United  
26 States and a resident of San Francisco (San Francisco County, California).

27 6. Plaintiff-Intervenor HENNESSEY-SEVERSON has ADHD-I and learning disabilities.

1 These conditions limit and substantially limit several major life activities. She is an individual  
2 with a “disability” within the meaning of federal and state disability nondiscrimination laws,  
3 including Title III of the ADA and California’s Unruh Civil Rights Act.

4       7. Defendant LSAC is a Delaware corporation with its headquarters in Newtown,  
5 Pennsylvania. The LSAC administers the LSAT throughout the United States, including in this  
6 judicial district. The LSAC is a “person that offers examinations or courses related to  
7 applications, licensing, certification, or credentialing for secondary or post-secondary education,  
8 professional, or trade purposes” within the meaning of Title III of the ADA. The LSAC is also a  
9 “public accommodation” within the meaning of Title III of the ADA. The LSAC is a “business  
10 establishment” within the meaning of California’s Unruh Civil Rights Act.

## STATEMENT OF FACTS

## **LSAC and the Law School Admission Test (LSAT)**

13       8. Defendant LSAC administers the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), a half-day,  
14       standardized test used in the admissions decisions of virtually all ABA-accredited law schools,  
15       and many non-accredited law schools. The test consists of five multiple choice sections (35  
16       minutes each) and one writing sample (35 minutes). Approximately 150,000 LSATs are  
17       administered worldwide each year. Defendant LSAC also offers a “Credential Assembly  
18       Service” to law schools, in which applicants to law school upload undergraduate transcripts,  
19       evaluations, and application materials. LSAC then disseminates the application materials, along  
20       with an applicant’s LSAT score report, to law schools.

21       9. Applicants with disabilities may seek testing accommodations on the LSAT pursuant to  
22 the LSAC's policies, procedures, and practices. As alleged herein, these policies, procedures,  
23 and practices are inconsistent with the requirements of state and federal laws and operate to  
24 discriminate against and exclude persons with disabilities.

25       10. Under the LSAC's policies, procedures, and practices, disabled applicants seeking  
26 testing accommodations must complete and submit an extensive portfolio of current and  
27 historical materials including medical and/or psychological documentation by a stated deadline.

7 (c) Applicants with “cognitive and psychological impairments,” a category which  
8 includes learning disorders, processing deficiencies, and ADHD, are referred to a three-page,  
9 single-spaced document detailing extensive additional requirements, including:

- Full psychoeducational and/or neuropsychological evaluation which addresses sensory-motor, auditory, attention, and visual-spatial issues; receptive and expressive language; immediate and delayed memory; achievement; and intelligence; and which includes a comprehensive diagnostic interview;
- Complete aptitude assessment such as Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, Fourth Edition (WAIS-IV);
- Comprehensive achievement battery;
- Timed reading comprehension measure;
- Timed writing measures if additional time on the nonscored writing section is requested;
- Measures of spelling and grammar skills if a computer with spelling and/or grammar check is requested;
- Objective data measures (such as the CPT-II or TOVA) and tests measuring information processing (such as WAIS-IV) for applicants with information/attention processing diagnoses (including ADHD); and
- Personality tests (LSAC recommends submitting an objective test such as the MMPI-II or MCMI-III and a projective testing instrument like the Rorschach) for applicants seeking accommodations based on psychiatric disorders.

23 All tests for cognitive and psychological disabilities must be no older than three years if the  
24 applicant is under the age of twenty-one, or five years if the applicant is over twenty-one.

25 (d) Applicants who are blind or who have other visual disabilities must submit, in  
26 addition to the standard requirements, a four-page Evaluation Report filled out by their treating  
27 practitioner.

7       11. The LSAC's documentation requirements for testing accommodations are frequently  
8 onerous and unnecessary. For example, applicants seeking testing accommodations related to a  
9 learning disability typically can demonstrate a history of testing accommodations in other  
10 contexts and can provide copies of psycho-educational testing and evaluation documents  
11 conducted throughout K-12. Yet to comply with the LSAC's rigid documentation requirements,  
12 including the specific tests required and the requirement that the testing be less than three or five  
13 years old (depending upon the age of the individual), these applicants must often hire  
14 psychologists and other medical professionals to administer and compile the battery of required  
15 tests and reports. The out-of-pocket costs can total thousands of dollars.

16       12. The LSAC's documentation requirements are frequently unclear. For example, various  
17 testing measures are described as "preferred" or "helpful" but the requirements nowhere explain  
18 the relative weight or preference given to such instruments, or the risks involved with providing  
19 an alternate measure.

20       13. The LSAC's procedures for receiving, evaluating, and reconsidering requests for testing  
21 accommodations are vague, ambiguous, and arbitrary.

22 (a) While LSAC publications set forth specific deadlines for requesting  
23 accommodations, applicants are urged to submit requests “well in advance” of the deadlines or  
24 “there will be little or no opportunity to rectify deficiencies in documentation or seek  
25 reconsideration.” No definition is provided for “well in advance.” Related, the deadline for  
26 “reconsideration,” which is Defendant LSAC’s label for its appeals process, is the same deadline  
27 as for submitting an original request for testing accommodations. An applicant can thus meet or

1 exceed the initial deadline, be denied, and not have any time remaining for an appeal.

2 (b) The standards by which applications are evaluated initially and upon  
 3 reconsideration are opaque. Denial letters are frequently cursory (*e.g.*, “the documentation you  
 4 provided did not reflect an impairment related to taking the LSAT.”).

5 (c) As a result, it is extraordinarily difficult for an applicant to determine what is  
 6 missing from his or her application, obtain that information from a permitted source, and submit  
 7 the information in time to obtain accommodation prior to a scheduled test date.

8 14. Those applicants who are successful in obtaining testing accommodations from the  
 9 LSAC do not receive an LSAT score in the same format as their nondisabled peers. Unlike the  
 10 test scores issued by the College Board or by Educational Testing Service (ETS), such as the  
 11 SAT, PSAT, and GRE, the scores of persons who take the LSAT with testing accommodations  
 12 are “flagged” – they are accompanied by a letter disclosing that the test was taken under  
 13 nonstandard testing conditions.

14 **Andrew Quan**

15 15. Plaintiff-Intervenor ANDREW QUAN has ADHD, dysgraphia, hypotonia, and a visual-  
 16 motor integration deficit with slow processing speed. ADHD (Attention Deficit-Hyperactive  
 17 Disorder) is a neurobehavioral condition with common symptoms of difficulty paying attention,  
 18 staying on task, and controlling impulses. Dysgraphia, a learning disability that affects the motor  
 19 and information processing skills associated with writing, can result in spelling errors, “bad”  
 20 handwriting, difficulty expressing thoughts in writing, and/or difficulty organizing letters,  
 21 numbers, and words on a line or page. Hypotonia refers to decreased muscle tone, which can  
 22 affect an individual’s mobility, posture, breathing, speech, and reflexes. The diagnosis “visual-  
 23 motor integration deficit” is correlated with the code for “Learning Disability Not Otherwise  
 24 Specified” in the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) IV. Mr. QUAN  
 25 also has physical disabilities, in part related to the above-referenced disabilities. These  
 26 conditions limit and substantially limit several major life activities including reading,  
 27 concentrating, and the operation of a major bodily function (brain).

1       16. Mr. QUAN was first diagnosed with disabilities when he was nine years old. Mr. Quan  
 2 has consistently received accommodations in school, beginning in the fourth grade. He received  
 3 accommodations for the ACT, a pre-college standardized exam. Mr. QUAN attended the  
 4 University of California, Santa Cruz, where he received accommodations for his disabilities,  
 5 such as double time on exams, a quiet testing environment, use of a scribe, and use of a laptop  
 6 for essay exams. Mr. QUAN graduated from UC Santa Cruz with honors in June 2012.

7       17. Mr. QUAN has wanted to become a lawyer since he was a child. He seeks to advocate  
 8 for the civil rights of persons with disabilities.

9       18. When he registered for the October 2011 LSAT, Mr. QUAN applied for accommodations  
 10 largely equivalent to those he received in college: extra time, a private testing space, a non-  
 11 Scantron answer sheet, and the use of a scribe or a laptop. His application included extensive  
 12 documentation regarding his disabilities and listed the accommodations he had received in the  
 13 past. He submitted LSAC's required forms (a three-page "Evaluator Form" filled out by  
 14 licensed psychologist; a three-page "Evaluator Form" filled out by an M.D.; a three-page  
 15 "Physical Evaluation Report filled out by an M.D.; and a four-page "Candidate Form" which he  
 16 filled out). He also provided an April 22, 2008 psycho-educational assessment report confirming  
 17 and analyzing his disabilities based upon a review of his special education history and the results  
 18 of psychometric testing (WAIS-III, Developmental Test of Visual Motor Integration (VMI), the  
 19 Beery Developmental Test of Motor Coordination, and Test of Visual-Perceptual Skills – Upper  
 20 Level (TVPS-UL)), and noting "greatly varying" test results with "significant" gaps between  
 21 verbal aptitude/ability and visual-motor integration skills. He also provided confirmation that he  
 22 had received testing accommodations while a student at UC Santa Cruz, and copies of IEP  
 23 documentation confirming special education services in high school from Fall 2004 through  
 24 Spring 2008, including the granting of extra time and other accommodations on tests.

25       19. In a letter dated September 7, 2011, Defendant LSAC requested additional  
 26 documentation, including "testing results and a full diagnostic report from a comprehensive up-  
 27 to-date psychoeducational/neuropsychological assessment" in compliance with the LSAC's

1 guidelines. Mr. QUAN provided additional documentation; he also researched and wrote a letter  
 2 to Defendant LSAC, arguing that under both the ADA and 2010 U.S. Department of Justice  
 3 (DOJ) regulations, his documentation was sufficient. He noted that obtaining and providing the  
 4 required testing and report would cost thousands of dollars, and would not be covered by his  
 5 insurance.

6 20. Thereafter, on September 13, 2011, Defendant LSAC denied Mr. QUAN's request for  
 7 testing accommodations. The denial letter reiterated the need to provide "testing results and a  
 8 full diagnostic report from a comprehensive **up-to-date** psychoeducational/neuropsychological  
 9 assessment," emphasis in original, in compliance with the LSAC's guidelines. (The  
 10 psychoeducational assessment provided by Mr. QUAN had been completed three and a half  
 11 years earlier in March/April 2008.) The letter further stated that any such compliant report  
 12 would not be considered for the October 2011 LSAT: "Since the receipt deadline for this  
 13 administration of the LSAT has passed, no further consideration will be given to your request for  
 14 accommodations until all of the aforementioned documentation is received for a **future** LSAT  
 15 only." The LSAC never responded to Mr. QUAN's concurrent request for testing  
 16 accommodations related to his physical disabilities.

17 21. Mr. QUAN took the October 2011 LSAT without accommodations. Mr. QUAN's non-  
 18 accommodated score was inconsistent with his academic achievement.

19 22. Mr. QUAN next registered for December 2011 LSAT. He again applied for  
 20 accommodations, and provided documentation, by LSAC, by the stated deadline. By October  
 21 31, 2011, Mr. QUAN was again denied accommodations.

22 23. Mr. QUAN contacted the Legal Aid Society – Employment Law Center (LAS-ELC).  
 23 On November 11, 2011, LAS-ELC counsel notified Defendant LSAC that its handling of Mr.  
 24 QUAN's request for testing accommodations violated Department of Justice 2010 regulations  
 25 designed to address the "inappropriate or burdensome" standards used by testing agencies such  
 26 as the LSAC when evaluating requests for testing accommodations.

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1       24. On November 28, 2011, Defendant LSAC responded to LAS-ELC counsel as follows:  
2       "This will acknowledge receipt of your email and attachment. Your request for reconsideration  
3       not timely and therefore cannot be considered." Defendant LSAC sent a similar letter to Mr.  
4       QUAN. On November 28, 2011, LAS-ELC reiterated to Defendant LSAC that it had been  
5       required to comply with the DOJ regulations as of March 15, 2011. On November 28, 2011,  
6       Defendant LSAC responded with an email stating in its entirety: "LSAC was fully aware of the  
7       legal authorities you cited when it reviewed Mr. Quan's file. Mr. Quan's file remains  
8       incomplete."

9       25. In an effort to mitigate the denial of testing accommodations, Mr. QUAN hired an  
10      LSAT tutor. Mr. QUAN took the December 2011 LSAT without accommodations. Again, his  
11      non-accommodated score was not commensurate with his academic record.

12       26. Mr. QUAN applied to dozens of law schools, including the public law schools in  
13 California. He expended time and resources crafting a personal statement to explain the stark  
14 disconnect between his excellent academic record and his poor performance on the LSAT.  
15 Initially, Mr. QUAN was not accepted to any “top tier” law schools. After months on the  
16 waiting list, he was accepted to UC Hastings, in the Legal Education Opportunity Program  
17 (LEOP) program.

## Nicholas Jones

19       27. Plaintiff-Intervenor NICHOLAS JONES has two eye conditions, amblyopia and  
20 posterior vitreous detachment, which result in compromised vision. Amblyopia causes Mr.  
21 JONES to have impaired visual processing. Posterior vitreous detachment causes persistent  
22 “floaters” to appear in Mr. JONES’s field of vision. These conditions limit and substantially  
23 limit several major life activities including seeing, reading, and the operation of a major bodily  
24 function (special sense organ). Mr. JONES must constantly move his eyes from side to side to  
25 remove the “floaters” that appear in his field of vision, but as soon as he refocuses, the spots re-  
26 appear. Because his reading is interrupted each time he must clear his vision, Mr. JONES often  
27 must go back to re-read something in order to orient himself. Mr. JONES’s reading speed,

1 comprehension, and concentration are thus all affected by his disability. Mr. JONES also  
 2 experiences migraines and fatigue as a result of his visual conditions.

3       28. Mr. JONES took the September 2009 LSAT without accommodations. His non-  
 4 accommodated score was not commensurate with his academic record, and the score report  
 5 provided by Defendant LSAC showed that the large majority of incorrect answers occurred at the  
 6 end of each section, when Mr. JONES was running out of time. Mr. JONES is and historically  
 7 has been a strong student; Mr. JONES graduated Salutatorian from high school and his  
 8 cumulative undergraduate LSAC-calculated GPA was 3.98/4.00.

9       29. On or about October 20, 2009, after learning about testing accommodations from his  
 10 board certified ophthalmologist and retinal surgeon, Mr. JONES applied for accommodations on  
 11 the December 2009 LSAT. Mr. JONES requested time-and-a-half on both the multiple choice  
 12 and written portions of the exam (i.e., an additional 17.5 minutes for each 35-minute section).  
 13 He also requested a 5-minute break between each section. In support of his request, Mr. JONES  
 14 submitted a three-page “Candidate Form” and a four-page “Evaluator Form” completed by his  
 15 treating provider, a board-certified ophthalmologist and retinal surgeon, which listed Mr.  
 16 JONES’s diagnoses and described the practical effects of Mr. JONES’s visual conditions. Mr.  
 17 JONES also wrote a two-page letter describing his struggle to complete the LSAT in the allotted  
 18 time due to his disability, and explaining that he had not sought accommodations in the past  
 19 because he had not known they existed.

20       30. In a letter dated October 27, 2009, Defendant LSAC denied Mr. JONES’s request for  
 21 accommodations. Defendant gave no reason for the denial and provided no suggestions as to  
 22 how Mr. JONES might successfully appeal. The letter stated only that the documentation  
 23 submitted “did not reflect an impairment related to taking the LSAT” and that if Mr. JONES  
 24 wished to seek reconsideration, “new information must be provided by your evaluator.” The  
 25 letter noted that the deadline for reconsideration was November 3, 2009 – a week away and the  
 26 same deadline for an initial request for accommodations.

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1       31. Mr. JONES appealed this decision prior to the November 3 deadline. On short notice,  
 2 he obtained and provided a supplemental, two-page letter from his treating ophthalmologist and  
 3 retinal surgeon which detailed the link between Mr. JONES's conditions and his reading speed  
 4 and reading ability, as well as the fatigue and headaches that accompany Mr. JONES's disability.  
 5 The ophthalmologist stressed Mr. JONES's need for accommodations on the LSAT.

6       32. On November 9, 2009, Defendant LSAC again denied Mr. JONES's appeal in a three-  
 7 sentence letter. The letter stated that a "Vision Rehabilitation Specialist" had reviewed his file  
 8 and that Mr. JONES had not demonstrated that he had a "significant visual condition."

9       33. Mr. JONES contacted the LAS-ELC. On November 24, 2009, LAS-ELC counsel  
 10 notified Defendant LSAC that Mr. JONES's visual conditions constitute disabilities affecting his  
 11 reading speed and stamina, thereby impairing his ability to sit for the LSAT without  
 12 accommodations. Counsel explained that Mr. JONES had not previously requested or received  
 13 accommodations, but had obtained such modifications informally by working with flexible  
 14 instructors and accessing on-line courses. Counsel requested that accommodations be put in  
 15 place for the December 5, 2009 LSAT.

16       34. On December 1, 2009, Defendant LSAC responded that "Mr. Jones does not  
 17 demonstrate that his visual difficulties ... affect his ability to take the LSAT without  
 18 accommodations. In fact, he took the September 2009 LSAT *without* requesting  
 19 accommodations and was able to complete every item on each section" (italics in original).  
 20 Although Mr. JONES submitted supplemental material prior the November 3, 2009 deadline,  
 21 Defendant LSAC stated that "further reconsideration is not possible as the deadline for seeking  
 22 reconsideration was November 3, 2009."

23       35. On December 3, 2009, LAS-ELC counsel sent a further letter to Defendant LSAC.  
 24 Counsel noted that the content of the prior communications from the LSAC violated a 2002  
 25 settlement agreement between LSAC and the DOJ, prohibiting LSAC from considering prior  
 26 performance on standardized testing when evaluating an accommodations request, and requiring  
 27 that defendant LSAC provide "clear written explanations" in denial letters, and that neither the

1 initial denial nor the denial of reconsideration had done so. Defendant LSAC did not change its  
2 position and Mr. JONES was not granted testing accommodations.

3 36. Mr. JONES again took the LSAT without accommodations on December 5, 2009. His  
4 score was, again, not commensurate with his academic record. The score report provided by  
5 Defendant LSAC, again, revealed that the large majority of incorrect answers occurred at the end  
6 of each section.

7       37. Mr. JONES took the test again in February 2010 without accommodations; his score did  
8 not significantly change. As the February 2010 LSAT was an undisclosed test, no detailed score  
9 report was provided by Defendant LSAC.

10       38. Mr. JONES applied to law school using results from his non-accommodated LSAT  
11 scores. Because he was not satisfied with his score, Mr. JONES applied to more than thirty  
12 schools, including all of the public law schools in California. He was denied admission, or was  
13 waitlisted, to almost all of the higher-ranked schools to which he applied. Mr. JONES is  
14 currently a 3L at a private law school, where he pays full tuition. He is informed and believes,  
15 and thereupon alleges, that he would have qualified for scholarship monies with an  
16 accommodated LSAT score.

## Elizabeth Hennessey-Severson

18 39. Plaintiff-Intervenor ELIZABETH HENNESSEY-SEVERSON has Reading Disorder,  
19 Disorder of Written Expression, Mathematics Disorder, and ADHD-I (Attention Deficit-  
20 Hyperactive Disorder-Inattentive). These conditions limit and substantially limit several major  
21 life activities including reading, concentrating, and the operation of a major bodily function  
22 (brain). Her combined learning disabilities cause Ms. HENNESSEY-SEVERSON to have  
23 impaired reading, writing, and math abilities. Her ADHD-I results in difficulty with sustained  
24 concentration, processing speed, distractibility, and difficulties with planning and organization.

25 40. Ms. HENNESSEY-SEVERSON was first diagnosed with her disabilities in 2002, while  
26 she was in high school, although she began manifesting symptoms years earlier, while in grade  
27 school. Ms. HENNESSEY-SEVERSON received the accommodation of extra time both in high

1 school and as an undergraduate at Dartmouth College. She also received extra time as an  
 2 accommodation on the SAT.

3 41. Ms. HENNESSEY-SEVERSON wants to be a civil rights attorney working on behalf of  
 4 individuals in the criminal justice system. She worked for two years as a paralegal in San  
 5 Francisco after graduating from college.

6 42. Ms. HENNESSEY-SEVERSON applied to take the LSAT on April 27, 2011, in  
 7 advance of the May 3, 2011 deadline. She requested extra time on both the multiple choice and  
 8 reading portions of the LSAT (20 extra minutes for each 35-minute section), and 10-minute  
 9 breaks between each section. She submitted extensive documentation to Defendant LSAC which  
 10 established her disabilities and confirmed prior testing accommodations received. Ms.  
 11 HENNESSEY-SEVERSON submitted LSAC's required forms, including: a four-page  
 12 "Candidate Form"; a two-page "Evaluator Form" addressing her learning disabilities filled out  
 13 by a licensed psychologist with a specialty in pediatric neuropsychology; and a second two-page  
 14 "Evaluator Form" addressing her ADHD-I filled out by the same licensed psychologist. Ms.  
 15 HENNESSEY-SEVERSON also provided a complete psycho-educational assessment dated July  
 16 2009; a previous psycho-educational assessment dated October 2002; confirmation that she had  
 17 received testing accommodations while a student at Dartmouth; and confirmation that she had  
 18 received testing accommodations on the SAT.

19 43. Defendant LSAC denied Ms. HENNESSEY-SEVERSON's request by letter dated April  
 20 29, 2011. In the letter, Defendant LSAC "acknowledged" that Ms. HENNESSEY-SEVERSON  
 21 had a learning disorder, but stated that her documentation did not demonstrate a "limitation of a  
 22 major life activity" which affected her ability to take the test under standard (non-  
 23 accommodated) conditions. To support its decision, Defendant LSAC cited Ms. HENNESSEY-  
 24 SEVERSON's high IQ score and her "very superior" and "high average" scores on portions of  
 25 her psycho-educational assessment. The letter stated that Ms. HENNESSEY-SEVERSON had  
 26 until May 3, 2011, to seek reconsideration – four days away and the same deadline for an initial  
 27 request for accommodations.

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Plaintiff-Intervenors' Complaint In Intervention for Damages, Equitable Relief, Attorneys' Fees and  
 Costs

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1       44. By May 3, 2011, Ms. HENNESSEY-SEVERSON requested reconsideration of the  
2 denial, and submitted a five-page letter from her psychologist in support of her request. The  
3 psychologist explained that the “very superior” and “high average” scores that Defendant LSAC  
4 cited to support its denial were achieved by Ms. HENNESSEY-SEVERSON on untimed  
5 measures of reading, whereas on other, timed, measures, the results were “poor.” The  
6 psychologist inserted three tables comparing HENNESSEY-SEVERSON’s performance various  
7 timed versus untimed scores.

8       45. On May 10, 2011, Defendant LSAC sent a letter to Ms. HENNESSEY-SEVERSON  
9 stating: "After full consideration of all of the documentation submitted on your behalf, there has  
10 been no change in our decision."

11       46. Thereafter, Ms. HENNESSEY-SEVERSON sought legal counsel to obtain testing  
12 accommodations on the LSAT. For some months, these efforts were unavailing. Recently,  
13 Defendant LSAC granted Ms. HENNESSEY-SEVERSON testing accommodations for the June  
14 2012 LSAT. Defendant LSAC did not grant all of the accommodations requested by Ms.  
15 HENNESSEY-SEVERSON. As well, Ms. HENNESSEY-SEVERSON's score is subject to  
16 Defendant LSAC's "flagging" policy.

17       47. Ms. HENNESSEY-SEVERSON intends to register to take the LSAT again at some point  
18 over the next several years. She intends to again request testing accommodations.

**FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF**  
**Disability-Based Discrimination in Violation of  
Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act  
42 U.S.C. § 12181 *et seq.***

22 48. Plaintiff-Intervenors incorporate by reference as if fully set forth herein the allegations  
23 contained in paragraphs 1 through 47 above.

24 49. As a privately operated service establishment whose operations affect commerce, the  
25 LSAC and the services it provides constitute a public accommodation. *See* 42 U.S.C. §  
26 12181(7), (7)(F); *Powell v. Nat'l Bd. of Med. Exam'rs*, 364 F.3d 79, 85 (2d Cir. 2004) (defendant

1 National Board of Medical Examiners “concedes that its services constitute a public  
 2 accommodation covered by Title III.”).

3       50. Title III of the ADA prohibits discrimination against a person with a disability in the full  
 4 and equal enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations  
 5 of any place of public accommodation. 41 U.S.C. § 12182(a).

6       51. Such prohibited discrimination includes the use of “eligibility criteria that screen[s] out  
 7 or tends to screen out” individuals with disabilities from equal enjoyment of the services,  
 8 privileges, or advantages being offered, as well as the use of “standards or criteria or methods of  
 9 administration [that] have the effect of discriminating on the basis of disability.” 42 U.S.C. §  
 10 12182 (b)(2)(A)(i), (b)(1)(D)(i).

11       52. Such prohibited discrimination includes the failure to make to make “reasonable  
 12 modifications to policies, practices, or procedures, when such modifications are necessary to  
 13 afford such goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations to individuals  
 14 with disabilities.” 42 U.S.C. § 12182 (b)(2)(A)(ii). A public accommodation “shall” make these  
 15 reasonable modifications. 28 C.F.R. § 36.302 (a).

16       53. Such prohibited discrimination includes providing individuals with disabilities an  
 17 “unequal benefit” compared to that of individuals without disabilities. 42 U.S.C. §  
 18 12182(b)(1)(A)(ii).

19       54. At all times relevant herein, and through to the present, Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN,  
 20 JONES, and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON were and are individuals with disabilities who required  
 21 reasonable modifications to participate on a full and equal basis on the LSAT and who are  
 22 entitled to protection against prohibited disability discrimination.

23       55. By imposing upon Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN, JONES, and HENNESSEY-  
 24 SEVERSON onerous and unnecessary documentation requirements to support requests for  
 25 testing accommodations, and by subjecting them to arbitrary, ineffective, and unpredictable  
 26 evaluation and appeals procedures, Defendant LSAC violated Title III of the ADA. By refusing  
 27 to make reasonable modifications to testing conditions for Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN, JONES,  
 28

1 and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON, Defendant LSAC violated Title III of the ADA. After  
 2 ultimately granting testing accommodations to Plaintiff-Intervenor HENNESSEY-SEVERSON,  
 3 but refusing to provide her with an LSAT score in the same format as her nondisabled peers,  
 4 Defendant LSAC violated Title III of the ADA.

5       56. As a result of Defendant LSAC's unlawful actions and inactions, Plaintiff-Intervenors  
 6 QUAN, JONES, and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON were forced to obtain and submit burdensome  
 7 and unnecessary documentation in support of their requests for testing accommodations. When  
 8 their requested accommodations were nevertheless denied, Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN, JONES,  
 9 and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON were subjected to the stress and aggravation of the LSAC's  
 10 capricious appeals process. Denied accommodations even after appealing, Plaintiff-Intervenors  
 11 QUAN, JONES, and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON were then forced to seek legal counsel.  
 12 Nevertheless denied accommodations, Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN and JONES were forced to  
 13 take the LSAT without the modifications that would have enabled them to earn a score that  
 14 effectively measured their aptitudes and abilities. After nearly 12 months of being denied  
 15 accommodations, and then granted some of the testing accommodations she requested, Plaintiff-  
 16 Intervenor HENNESSEY-SEVERSON was subjected to the Defendant LSAC's policy and  
 17 practice of "flagging" accommodated test scores.

18       57. Without an effectively accommodated LSAT score, Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN and  
 19 JONES were denied the opportunity to compete for admission to law schools on an equal basis  
 20 with their nondisabled peers. With an accommodated but "flagged" LSAT score, Plaintiff-  
 21 Intervenor HENNESSEY-SEVERSON was denied a test score in an equivalent format as her  
 22 nondisabled peers.

23       58. As a result of the Defendant LSAC's unlawful testing accommodation policies,  
 24 procedures, and practices, Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN, JONES, and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON  
 25 experienced emotional distress, extensive inconveniences, and financial burdens. The exclusion  
 26 of disabled test-takers including Plaintiff-Intervenors from equal access to the LSAT is  
 27 associated with additional outcomes, such as the denial of the experience, scholarship money,  
 28

1 and career opportunities that are available via admission to and graduation from higher-ranking  
 2 law schools.

3 59. In taking the above-described actions and inactions, Defendant LSAC failed to make  
 4 any good faith effort or attempt to comply with the ADA.

5 60. As a direct and proximate result of the unlawful acts described herein, Plaintiff-  
 6 Intervenors QUAN, JONES, and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON have suffered and continue to  
 7 suffer injuries.

8 61. Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN, JONES, and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON are entitled to  
 9 equitable relief, including declaratory and injunctive relief, attorneys' fees and costs, and such  
 10 other relief as the court considers to be appropriate.

11 **SECOND CLAIM FOR RELIEF**

12 **Failure to Provide an Accessible Examination in  
 13 Violation of Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act  
 14 42 U.S.C. § 12189**

15 62. Plaintiff-Intervenors incorporate by reference the allegations in paragraphs 1 through  
 16 61, as though fully set forth herein.

17 63. Title III of the ADA specifies that “[a]ny person that offers examinations or courses  
 18 related to applications, licensing, certification, or credentialing for secondary or post-secondary  
 19 education, professional, or trade purposes shall offer such examinations or courses in a place and  
 20 manner accessible to persons with disabilities or offer alternative accessible arrangements for  
 21 such individuals.” 42 U.S.C. § 12189.

22 64. To ensure that “the key gateways to education and employment are open to individuals  
 23 with disabilities,” 28 C.F.R. § 36 app. B, examinations, like the LSAT, must be administered to  
 24 an individual with a disability so that “the examination results accurately reflect the individual’s  
 25 aptitude or achievement level or whatever other factor the examination purports to measure,  
 26 rather than reflecting the individual’s impaired sensory, manual, or speaking skills[.]” *Id.* at §  
 27 36.309(b)(1)(i). Meeting this standard may require the test administrator to make modifications  
 28 to the examination for an individual with a disability, including “changes in the length of time

1 permitted for completion of the examination and adaptation of the manner in which the  
 2 examination is given.” *Id.* at § 36.309(b)(2).

3       65. Testing entities such as Defendant LSAC are required to assure that any requests for  
 4 documentation are “reasonable and limited to the need for the modification, accommodation, or  
 5 auxiliary aid or service requested.” *Id.* at § 36.309(b)(1)(iv).

6       66. When considering requests for accommodations, a testing entity such as defendant  
 7 LSAC must give “considerable weight” to documentation of an individual’s past  
 8 accommodations on testing given under similar conditions. *Id.* at § 36.309(b)(1)(v).

9       67. When considering requests for accommodations, a testing entity such as defendant  
 10 LSAC must “respon[d] in a timely manner to requests for modifications, accommodations or aids  
 11 to ensure equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities.” *Id.* at § 36.309(b)(1)(vi).

12       68. At all times relevant herein, and through to the present, Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN,  
 13 JONES, and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON were and are individuals with disabilities who required  
 14 reasonable modifications to participate in a fair, full, and equal basis on the LSAT.

15       69. By imposing upon Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN, JONES, and HENNESSEY-  
 16 SEVERSON onerous and unnecessary documentation requirements to support requests for  
 17 testing accommodations, and by subjecting them to arbitrary, ineffective, and unpredictable  
 18 evaluation and appeals procedures, Defendant LSAC has violated Title III of the ADA. By  
 19 refusing to make reasonable modifications to testing conditions for Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN,  
 20 JONES, and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON, Defendant LSAC has violated Title III of the ADA.  
 21 After ultimately granting some of the testing accommodations requested to Plaintiff-Intervenor  
 22 HENNESSEY-SEVERSON, but refusing to provide her with an LSAT score in the same format  
 23 as her nondisabled peers, Defendant LSAC violated Title III of the ADA.

24       70. In taking the above-described actions and inactions, Defendant LSAC failed to make  
 25 any good faith effort or attempt to comply with the ADA.

26       71. As a direct and proximate result of the unlawful acts described herein, Plaintiff-  
 27 Intervenors QUAN, JONES, and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON have suffered and continue to

1 suffer injuries.

2 72. Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN, JONES, and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON are entitled to  
 3 equitable relief, including injunctive and declaratory relief, attorneys' fees and costs, and such  
 4 other relief as the court considers to be appropriate.

5 **THIRD CLAIM FOR RELIEF**

6 **Disability-Based Discrimination in Violation of  
 7 California's Unruh Civil Rights Act  
 Cal. Civ. Code § 51, *et seq.***

8 73. Plaintiff-Intervenors incorporate by reference the allegations in paragraphs 1 through  
 9 72, as though fully set forth herein.

10 74. California's Unruh Act provides that "all persons ... no matter what their sex, race,  
 11 color, religion, ancestry, national origin, or disability are entitled to the full and equal  
 12 accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services in all business establishments of  
 13 every kind whatsoever ...." Cal. Civ. Code § 51(b). Further, "[a] violation of the right of any  
 14 individual under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-336) ... also  
 15 constitute[s] a violation of [the Act]." Cal. Civ. Code § 51(f).

16 75. Under the Act, and as required by the ADA, a business establishment must make  
 17 reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures, when such modifications are  
 18 necessary to afford such goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations to  
 19 individuals with disabilities, and may not engage in discrimination against a person with a  
 20 disability, as defined. *See* para. 49 to 53 and 63 to 67, *supra*.

21 76. At all times relevant herein, and through to the present, Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN,  
 22 JONES, and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON were and are individuals with disabilities who required  
 23 reasonable modifications to participate in a fair, full, and equal basis on the LSAT.

24 77. In violation of their right to be free from disability-based discrimination under Title III  
 25 of the ADA, Defendant LSAC imposed upon Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN, JONES, and  
 26 HENNESSEY-SEVERSON onerous and unnecessary documentation requirements to support  
 27 requests for testing accommodations, and subjected them to an arbitrary, ineffective, and

1 unpredictable evaluation and appeals procedure. In violation of their right to be free from  
2 disability-based discrimination under Title III of the ADA, Defendant LSAC refused to provide  
3 Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN, JONES and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON with the reasonable  
4 modifications they needed to take the LSAT on an equal basis with other nondisabled test takers.  
5 In violation of her right to be free from disability-based discrimination under Title III of the  
6 ADA, Defendant LSAC refused to provide Plaintiff-Intervenor HENNESSEY-SEVERSON –  
7 who was ultimately granted some of the testing accommodations she requested after months of  
8 delay – with a test score in an equivalent format as her nondisabled peers.

9       78. In taking the above-described actions and inactions, Defendant LSAC failed to make any  
10 good faith effort or attempt to comply with state and federal laws.

11       79. Defendant LSAC's unlawful actions were intentional, willful, malicious and/or done  
12 with reckless disregard to Plaintiff-Intervenors' right to be free from discrimination based on  
13 their disabilities.

14 80. As a direct and proximate result of the unlawful acts described herein, Plaintiff-  
15 Intervenors QUAN, JONES, and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON have suffered and continue to  
16 suffer injuries, including emotional injuries.

17 81. Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN, JONES, and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON are entitled to  
18 actual damages, treble damages, attorneys' fees and costs, declaratory and injunctive relief, and  
19 other appropriate relief as determined by this court.

**FOURTH CLAIM FOR RELIEF**

**Unlawful Business Practices in Violation of  
California's Unfair Business Practices Act  
Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200, *et seq.***

23 82. Plaintiff-Intervenors incorporate by reference as if fully set forth herein the allegations  
24 contained in paragraphs 1 through 81, above.

25       83. California's Unfair Business Practices Act prohibits "any unlawful, unfair or fraudulent  
26       business act or practice." Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code § 17200.

27 84. Defendant LSAC committed unlawful and unfair business practices, including but not

1 limited to: violations of Title III of the ADA; and violations of the Unruh Civil Rights Act.

2 85. As a result of these unfair business practices, Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN, JONES and  
 3 HENNESSEY-SEVERSON have suffered injuries in fact, as described herein.

4 86. As a result of these unfair business practices, Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN, JONES and  
 5 HENNESSEY-SEVERSON have also lost money or property, such losses incurred due to  
 6 postage, mileage, telephone, Xeroxing, and faxing associated with the unlawful documentation  
 7 and appeals process, and additional application fees associated with the effects of receiving an  
 8 LSAT score that did not effectively measure their aptitude and abilities. Mr. QUAN expended  
 9 additional monies on two LSAT review courses and for assistance with his applications to ensure  
 10 that his personal statement explained the disparity between his academic record and his test  
 11 score. Ms. HENNESSEY-SEVERSON also expended additional monies on two LSAT review  
 12 courses. Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN, JONES, and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON have further  
 13 been denied the benefit of the service which they purchased from defendant LSAC, that is, a  
 14 professional examination that lawfully and fairly measured their abilities and aptitudes, and that  
 15 provided a test score in a format equivalent to that granted to nondisabled peers.

16 87. Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN, JONES and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON are entitled to  
 17 restitution, injunctive relief, declaratory relief, attorneys' fees and costs, and other appropriate  
 18 relief as determined by this court.

#### 19 **DECLARATORY AND EQUITABLE RELIEF**

20 88. Plaintiff-Intervenors incorporate by reference the allegations in paragraphs 1 through  
 21 87, as though fully set forth herein.

22 89. Defendant LSAC's unlawful policies, procedures, and practices, and their impacts upon  
 23 persons with disabilities, are longstanding. However, because these unlawful actions and  
 24 inactions affect persons taking an entrance examination for law school, and these persons  
 25 inevitably move on from taking the LSAT to either entering or not entering law school, the  
 26 claims of the Plaintiff-Intervenors are capable of repetition, yet evading review.

27 90. A present and actual controversy exists between Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN, JONES,

1 and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON and Defendant concerning their rights and respective duties.  
 2 Plaintiff-Intervenors contend that Defendant violated their rights under the ADA and the Unruh  
 3 Civil Rights Act. Plaintiff-Intervenors are informed and believe, and thereon allege, that  
 4 defendant LSAC denies these allegations. Declaratory relief is therefore necessary and  
 5 appropriate.

6 91. Plaintiff-Intervenors QUAN, JONES, and HENNESSEY-SEVERSON seek a judicial  
 7 declaration of the rights and duties of the respective parties.

8 92. Plaintiff-Intervenor HENNESSEY-SEVERSON seeks injunctive relief.

9 **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

10 WHEREFORE, Plaintiff-Intervenors respectfully request that this court order:

- 11 1. Declaratory and injunctive relief;
- 12 2. Equitable relief;
- 13 3. Actual damages;
- 14 4. Treble damages;
- 15 5. Restitution;
- 16 6. Reasonable attorneys' fees, reasonable expert witness fees, and other costs of the action,  
     pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 12205, 29 U.S.C. § 2617(a)(3), Cal. Civil Code §§ 52(a), 54.3(a),  
     55, Cal. Code Civ. Proc. §1021.5, and other laws;
- 17 7. Interest, including pre- and post-judgment interest and an upward adjustment for  
     inflation; and
- 18 8. Such other and further relief as this court may deem just and proper.

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Plaintiff-Intervenors' Complaint In Intervention for Damages, Equitable Relief, Attorneys' Fees and Costs

Case No. CV 12-1830-EMC

1 Dated: October 19, 2012

Respectfully submitted,

2  
3 Claudia Center  
4 The LEGAL AID SOCIETY - EMPLOYMENT  
5 LAW CENTER

6 By: /s/ Claudia Center  
7 Claudia Center

8 Attorney for Plaintiff-Intervenors ANDREW  
9 QUAN, NICHOLAS JONES, and ELIZABETH  
10 HENNESSEY-SEVERSON

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